



## NEWS RELEASE

Release Date: October 24, 2012

Contact: Ronja Abel, [rael@mt.gov](mailto:rael@mt.gov)

Montana SBDC Lead Center, Montana Department of Commerce

### **Montana Small Business Development Center Network Expands Counseling Expertise**

#### *SBDC's Earn Certification in Exporting Counseling and Participate in Technology-Based Economic Development Training Program*

Helena, MT – The Montana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network spent over 4, 900 hours counseling 939 small business owners and entrepreneurs in federal fiscal year 2012, resulting in the creation of 58 new businesses, \$84,338,077 million in capital infusion, and the creation and retention of over 642 jobs throughout the state.

“These have been challenging economic times for Montana and the SBDC has been a strategic partner helping small companies grow,” said Steve Price, Acting SBA Montana District Director. “The network is committed to providing grassroots counseling and training services so that Montana small businesses earn a profit and hire more workers.”

Over the past year, two SBDC Directors became certified as Export and Trade Counselors as part of the National Export Initiative. The certification training was created by the U.S. Commercial Service and the U.S. Small Business Administration to help achieve the initiative’s goal of doubling U.S. exports. Dan Anderson, Director of the SBDC at Montana Business Assistance Connection in Helena, and Rebecca Engum, Director of the SBDC at Great Falls Development Authority in Great Falls, were certified during the summer.

Four SBDC service centers recently completed a technology-based economic development training program titled Tech ED. The program, a series of six-webinars, was created by the Montana Technology Innovation Partnership (MTIP) designed for the Montana SBDC. The goal of the Tech ED program is to increase the capacity of the SBDC to assist technology-based companies. Technology companies, innovators and inventors need specialized assistance, and the Tech ED program aims to teach the SBDC business advisors how to best counsel these clients. Tech ED is sponsored by the Montana State University (MSU) Tech Transfer Office under an EPSCoR grant.

Looking ahead, the Montana SBDC Network will be hosting their fourth annual Invest in Success small business conference April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Montana Tech in Butte. The conference offers small businesses and potential entrepreneurs the opportunity to obtain knowledge to enhance their financial, managerial and technical skills as well as connect with resource partners and others in the small business community. Interested parties can find more information and register for the event at [www.regonline.com/investinsuccess](http://www.regonline.com/investinsuccess).

The Montana SBDC Network is comprised of ten service centers located throughout the state. The SBDC Directors and Business Advisors provide assistance to current and prospective small business owners. The local centers offer a wide range of assistance designed to meet the needs of small businesses. This includes dissemination of information, one-on-one counseling and training in areas related to business start-up, business expansion, operations, and management.

“The Montana SBDC Network is a group of professionals that help create job growth,” said Ann Desch, SBDC State Director. “The centers are phenomenal in moving businesses in the right direction and improving Montana’s economy one business at a time.”

Support for the SBDC is provided by the SBA, the Montana Department of Commerce, and nine host agencies across the state including local economic development organizations and institutions of higher education.

To find the SBDC nearest you and to request counseling, please visit <http://mtsbdc.ecenterdirect.com>, or contact the Montana SBDC Lead Center at (406) 841-2747.